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Agenda item 3

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE SESSION

Letter dated 18 April 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit to you, in your capacity as Chairman of the fifty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights, a statement by the Government of Colombia concerning the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Colombia (E/CN.4/1997/11).

I request you kindly to distribute this memorandum as a document in Spanish and English.

(Signed) Gustavo CASTRO GUERRERO
Ambassador

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Annex

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA CONCERNING THE REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON COLOMBIA (E/CN.4/1997/11)

The delegation of the Government of Colombia wishes to draw the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the fact that the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Colombia (E/CN.4/1997/11), in the section giving the background to the Agreement on the establishment of an Office of the High Commissioner in Colombia (sect. II, paras. 4 to 8), completely fails to mention that the initiative for the opening of the office came from the President of the Republic of Colombia, and also to the fact that there are several omissions and inaccuracies in paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the report which do not reflect the actual course of events.

It should be noted here that both the statement by the Chairman of the Commission regarding Colombia on 23 April 1996 and the Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the High Commissioner make it clear that the Colombian Government took the initiative in the establishment of the office. Both texts are to be found in the High Commissioner's report on Colombia (E/CN.4/1997/11).

Accordingly, our delegation requested the Chairman of the Commission to arrange for the distribution of a memorandum entitled "Action by the Colombian Government for the establishment of an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights", which gives a step-by-step account of the background to and history of the negotiation of the Agreement. The memorandum is contained in document E/CN.4/1997/128.